## APPLICATION PACKET

JUNE 2006 - JULY 2007

## ARKANSAS RURAL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS

- ARKANSAS RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT
  - ARKANSAS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION GRANT



STATE OF ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SERVICES
ARKANSAS RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

#### THIS PACKET INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- ARKANSAS RURAL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS GUIDELINES
- ARKANSAS RURAL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMS APPLICATION
  - APPLICATION FORM
  - CERTIFICATION LETTER FORM
  - RESOLUTION FORM
  - APPLICATION CHECKLIST

# Arkansas Rural Development Commission and The Department of Rural Services

The Department of Rural Services (DRS, formerly the Office of Rural Advocacy) is a state agency charged with assisting rural communities with a population of 20,000 and under. Established under Act 302 of 1991, DRS assists local agencies in rural areas with information and technical assistance. Currently, more than 80% of Arkansans live in rural areas.

The Arkansas Rural Development Commission (ARDC) is a group of citizens from around rural Arkansas charged with overseeing the programs of DRS. Seven of its members are appointed by the Governor, two are appointed by the Senate President Pro-Tem, and two are appointed by the Speaker of the House. Commissioners serve five-year terms, and meet throughout the year to discuss rural issues that affect Arkansans.

The mission of these two groups is to "Enhance the quality of life in rural Arkansas."

One focus of the agency is to be a source of information for rural citizens and provide support services to rural communities. DRS publishes a quarterly newsletter that covers rural policies and topics. The agency also hosts an annual conference and local forums around the state throughout the course of the year.

In May of 2000 the Department of Rural Services in partnership with the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis published the Arkansas Community Resource Guide. This guide provides information about state and federal agencies, non-profit foundations, and other organizations that provide funding and technical assistance for community development projects.

The other focus of the agency is to provide funding for worthwhile projects in rural communities through a variety of grant programs. One such program is the Arkansas Rural Community Grant Program. Since this grant's inception, more than \$6 million has been awarded to communities in all 75 counties. When the local community matches are added in, this grant program has generated more than \$12 million dollars toward enhancing rural communities.

## General Information and Eligibility

Through the Arkansas Rural Community Grant Programs, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission (ARDC) and the Department of Rural Services strive to enhance quality of life in the state by providing incentive grants on a matching basis. The ARCGP will assist rural communities with the improvement of local fire protection and related emergency services and construction, development and improvement of local facilities.

Incorporated cities and towns and unincorporated communities in RURAL areas of **less than 3,000 in population** (verifiable by current U.S. Census information) are **eligible** to apply for assistance through the Arkansas Rural Community Grant Programs (ARCGP). In keeping with our enabling legislation, a rural area is defined, for the purpose of this program, as "all the territory of the State of Arkansas that is <u>not within the outer boundary of any city or town having a population of 20,000 or more according to the latest federal census or within such a city's or town's neighboring urbanized areas."</u>

## What Type of Projects are Eligible?

Projects eligible for funding consideration under these programs include, but are not limited to:

### Arkansas Rural Community Development Grant

- Renovations, new construction or additions to publicly owned buildings (civic/ community centers, senior/youth centers, libraries, museums, etc.);
- Renovations, new construction, new equipment, or additions to parks and other publicly owned recreational facilities (baseball/softball fields, landscape/beautification projects, park and picnic areas, jogging/walking trails, etc.).

## Arkansas Rural Community Fire Protection Grant

- Renovations, new construction, or additions to fire facilities;
- Purchase of fire protection equipment and vehicles;
- Rehabilitation/retrofitting of newly acquired equipment and vehicles.

Note: If you are not positive that your project is eligible, please call and speak to a Grants Coordinator at 1-888-787-2527

## What Type of Projects are Ineligible?

Projects **NOT** eligible for funding consideration under either of the two programs include, but again are not limited to:

- municipal buildings (courthouses, city halls, police stations, sheriffs offices, and city or county jails);
- cemetery and other facility fencing and maintenance;
- chatting and paving of driveways and parking lots;
- fairground and rodeo construction owned by incorporated associations (see DRS County Fair Building Grant Program for fairground projects only)
- costs associated with normal day-to-day operations or maintenance;
- debt financing of any type (new or existing). Debt financing is defined for the purpose of this program as reimbursement of new or existing loans, loan payments, or reimbursement for equipment, facilities, labor, or property already purchased or constructed;
- training, travel, or other personnel related expenses;
- contingency fees.



Due to the limited amount of funds available for rural communities, the Arkansas Rural Development Commission has elected to make the following entities and projects <u>ineligible</u> for grant funding:

- County health units
- Preschools
- Transfer stations
- Water projects
- Emergency shelters
- Elections, and
- Private, non-profit associations

## Funding Availability

The Arkansas Legislature appropriated \$500,000 for each year of the 2007-2009 biennium to be expended through the Arkansas Rural Community Grant Programs.

Applicants with an eligible project may apply for up to \$15,000 in state matching funds toward a single project for community development or fire protection projects. As the grant pool is limited, it may sometimes be necessary to make awards of less than the amount actually requested and some projects unfortunately cannot be funded at all.

## Matching Requirement

The Arkansas Rural Community Grant Programs are 50/50 matching programs. This requires that the applicant must be able to match its grant award with a like amount of cash and/or property in-kind (fair market value, based on verifiable documentation provided by the applicant).

For purposes of this program, a match is defined as a combination of donated labor, donated land, donated materials, or cash to comprise at least 50% of the cost estimate provided by the community. Materials or labor not listed on the cost estimate of the application cannot be used as match. Local donations are defined as gifts given by local residents or locally based businesses for the purposes of the projects outlined in the applicant's grant proposal.

The match must be derived locally and can be:

- appropriated in full by the local governing body (city council or quorum court);
- donated by local businesses and citizens;
- money raised through fund-raisers; or
- a combination thereof.



All matching funds must be pledged at the time of application submission and be immediately available if an award is received. Donated labor *cannot* count as match if it is executed before the grant is awarded. Debt financing of any nature and proceeds from any other state grant programs cannot be used for matching purposes. Funds administered by the state that are not directly state funds, such as Act 833 money for fire departments, are eligible as match.

It is important to note that the local match does not have to be entirely in cash. In-kind donations of project equipment, labor, land, and materials will be accepted based on fair market value estimates provided by applicant and verified by DRS staff. For land, buildings, and donated labor to be eligible as match, they must be part of the project and must be included in the cost estimate of the project.

## Example of a PROPER Match

#### Cost Estimate:

Land	\$ 5,000
30 × 40 Metal Building	\$10,000
Labor to Construct Building	\$ 5,000
Reinforced Concrete Slab	\$10,000
	<u>\$30,000</u>

#### Funding Source Breakdown:

Requested from ARCGP	\$15,000
Donated Land	\$ 5,000
Donated Labor	\$ 5,000
Cash on Hand	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
	<u>\$30,000</u>

The land should be included on both the cost estimate and funding source breakdown if it is donated. If the community has to purchase the land, then it is only part of the cost estimate. Additionally, the applicant has broken down the cost of the building into material cost and labor cost, allowing them to match dollars with donated labor, but still have enough cash to pay for materials.

<u>Please note</u>: A total project cost *does not* have to equal \$30,000. It can be more or less. However, if the total project cost is more than \$30,000 the applicant should provide proof that the entire project can be funded. For example, if the total project cost is \$45,000, the applicant may apply for \$15,000 but should still show how the additional \$30,000 is being funded. Therefore, an applicant should only apply for what can be completed and funded within the project timeline of one year.

## Current Allowable Expenses for Donated Labor

Community Labor being Donated \$18.05 per hour

Professional Labor being Donated

Dozer/Dirt Work Amount they would normally charge Electrical (some charge \$20 or \$40 an hour)
Plumbing

Carpentry
Welding

## **Application Process**

#### WHEN can we apply?

The programs operate on a continuous cycle, with awards three times each state fiscal year. Fiscal year 2006 applications will be accepted beginning June 2006 and ending July 2007. <u>All applications must be received or postmarked by 4:30 p.m. on the day of the designated cycle deadline</u> or they will not be accepted. <u>Faxes of entire applications will not be accepted.</u>

#### SUBMITTING an Application

Applicants <u>must</u> gain the approval of their local governing body and the application <u>must</u> be signed by the county judge or mayor who will be ultimately responsible for the grant should it be received. This process includes completion of the application form and presentation of it to the local council if applying through the city or quorum court if applying through the county. The local governing official (county judge or mayor) must affix his signature to the following documents for the application to be considered complete:

- certification letter
- resolution
- application (page 6)

Applicants must submit an original application with original signatures plus 2 copies.

## Application Review and Awards Presentation

Applications are numbered and inspected for completeness and eligibility in the order received by the Department of Rural Services. Individual proposal consultations can be arranged with staff by appointment. Applicants are encouraged to submit applications well in advance of the cycle deadline to allow DRS staff to thoroughly review the application and assist applicants in correcting any deficiencies prior to the deadline.

Applications received postmarked after the deadline date will not be eligible for consideration.

After staff review for completeness and eligibility, applications undergo a three step review process. Following final review and approval, the grants are awarded by the Governor at a ceremony scheduled by DRS.

**REMEMBER:** A community cannot begin on <u>any</u> part of the project until they have received their grant funds.

## Documents needed for a Complete Grant

In addition to the grant application with all questions answered fully, communities must include the following in order for the application to be complete:

- <u>A signed Certification Letter</u>, **enclosed with application**, from the local governing official (mayor for incorporated areas, county judge for unincorporated areas).
- <u>A Resolution</u> passed by the city council (for incorporated areas) or the quorum court (for unincorporated areas) **enclosed with application**. The Resolution must have the mayor/county judge's signature, and the signature of the city/county clerk.
- <u>Backup documentation</u> for ALL items listed in the <u>project cost estimate</u>. This includes
  written professional estimates for all items the applicant is purchasing or receiving through
  donation. Only one bid is required for each item.
- <u>Backup documentation</u> for ALL items listed in the applicant's <u>funding source breakdown</u> (local match). This includes copies of bank statements for cash, letters indicating pledges of cash, and letters of intent to donate all materials, land and labor being donated. Applicants must show they have raised their entire portion of the match in order to be eligible.
- An 8.5"x11" map of the area to be served by the proposed project.
- <u>A deed, title, or other instrument showing proof of public ownership</u>. This may include an intent to donate letter from a private individual or a lease that extends for more than 10 years. This requirement does not apply to requests for equipment purchases.
- <u>Items of public input support</u>. This could include support letters for the project from members of the community, collaborators involved with the project, etc. Also accepted are minutes from public meetings where the project is discussed and petitions with signatures of support. It is <u>highly recommended that you have a letter of support from your local governing State Senator and/or State Representative</u>. At least ONE letter is required, but a community may have as many as it chooses.

## <u>In addition</u> all <u>FIRE PROTECTION</u> applications must include:

- Copies of the fire department's last three Act 833 Annual Expenditure Report Forms.
- Documentation of the fire department's ISO Rating.

If the applicant is a newly formed fire department with no Act 833 or ISO forms, a letter from the mayor/county judge explaining the situation is sufficient.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER!!!!!

- ❖ Use only paper clips or binder clips. Fancy binding is unnecessary and will be removed.
- Type the application.
- Apply for only what is needed. Total project costs do not have to equal \$30,000.
- Put everything on the checklist in order and label all backup documentation clearly.
- Include good documentation of public support.
- ❖ Only one project in either program may be awarded to a community at a time. If DRS receive two grants from the same community, the local governing official will make the final decision on the project he/she deems to have higher priority prior to funding consideration.
- Countywide applications must show that the project will affect rural communities and will be located within a rural community.
- ❖ An application for a project on land owned and operated solely by a non-profit or private organization is not eligible for funding. In order to be eligible, the land must be owned or have a lease agreement for more than 10 years with the city, municipality, county, or fire department.
- The grants may not be used to reimburse any part of the project already purchased or constructed. No part of the match can be completed until the community is notified that the grant application has been chosen for funding.



Questions about the grant program?
Not sure if your project is eligible?
Need to ask about the application process?
Give us a call toll-free at 1-888-RURAL-AR

Write us at:
101 East Capitol, Suite 202
Little Rock, AR 72201
Or e-mail us at:

Rural.Arkansas@arkansas.gov

## Reporting Requirements and Responsibilities

In compliance with Act 1009, project funds will be expended through a fund established on the books of the city or county clerk. A copy of the original proposal and all project expenditures, with invoices attached, will be approved by the mayor or county judge and remain on file in the office of the mayor or county judge for three years or until audited, whichever is later.

All project expenditures must be completed within 12 months after the date of the award. A final report, including cancelled checks and receipts of all funds expended, along with the state's one-half of any unspent funds, must be submitted by the mayor or county judge to DRS and subsequently to the Chief Fiscal Officer of the state. This must be done no more than 60 days following the project's completion or within the one-year period of the grant award, whichever comes first.

There are some instances in which a community needs more time to complete their project. The items listed in the application may have changed or the original estimate may have changed. To solve these problems a letter can be written to the Director for consent to extend the time frame in which the project would be completed or to purchase other items not listed on the application.

## Re-Submission Process

Due to the limited amount of funds in the grant pool, not all projects can be funded. Typically, only 1 out of every 5 grants is awarded. Anywhere from \$600,000 to \$1 million dollars is requested each cycle.

Applicants with no changes to their application may re-apply by forwarding a letter signed by the local governing official to the Department of Rural Services. There is no limit to the number of times one may resubmit.

The body of the resubmission letter should read as follows:

Please resubmit the <u>(community name)</u> Arkansas Rural Community Grant Application for reconsideration in Cycle <u>(1,2,3)</u> of Fiscal year \_\_\_\_\_, which ends <u>(deadline date)</u>.

## **Application Deadlines**



## Cycle I Calendar:

#### Deadline for Application Submission

August 25, 2006 by 4:30 p.m. (postmarked)

#### **Application Review Period**

❖ September, 2006

### **Grant Awards Announcements** (tentative)

October, 2006

## Cycle II Calendar:

## Deadline for Application Submission

❖ December 15, 2006 by 4:30 p.m. (postmarked)

## **Application Review Period**

❖ January, 2007

## **Grant Awards Announcements** (tentative)

February, 2007

## Cycle III Calendar:

## **Deadline for Application Submission**

March 23, 2007 by 4:30 p.m. (postmarked)

## **Application Review Period**

❖ April, 2007

## **Grant Awards Announcements** (tentative)

❖ May, 2007

# CHECKLIST FOR A COMPLETE RURAL COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATION

In addition to the grant application, communities must include the following in order for the application to be complete. Failure to submit any of the required documents by the cycle deadline will result in an incomplete application and will not be reviewed by the Arkansas Rural Development Commission for grant consideration. Please use this sheet to double check that all required information is submitted.

- Signed Certification Letter (enclosed with application) from the local governing official (mayor for incorporated areas, county judge for unincorporated areas).
- √ Certification Letter has current calendar year date on it.
- √ Resolution passed by the city council (for incorporated areas) or the quorum court (for unincorporated areas) and signed by the mayor/county judge and the city/county clerk.
- √ Resolution is notarized by the local governing official and city/county clerk.
- √ Resolution is numbered and has current calendar year date on it.
- √ An 8.5" x 11" map of the area to be served by the proposed project is included.
- √ A deed, title, or other instrument showing proof of public ownership is included. This may include an intent to donate letter from a private individual or a lease that extends for more than 10 years. Public ownership is defined as owned or leased for more than 10 years with the city, municipality, county, or fire department. This requirement does not apply to equipment purchases.
- Items of public input support included. This could include support letters for the project from the local community's state senator, state representative, members of the community, collaborators involved with the project, etc. Also accepted are minutes from public meetings where the project is discussed and petitions with signatures of support.
- Backup documentation for ALL items listed in the project cost estimate. This includes written professional estimates for all items the applicant is purchasing and letters of intent to donate all materials and labor being donated. Only one bid is required for each item.
- Backup documentation for ALL items listed on the funding source breakdown (local match). This includes copies of bank statements for cash, letter indicating pledges of cash, and letters of intent to donate all materials and labor being donated. Applicants must show they have raised their entire portion of the match in order to be eligible.
- √ The original grant is mailed PLUS two copies of the entire application packet.

#### For Fire Protection Applicants ONLY:

- $\sqrt{\phantom{a}}$  Copies of the fire department's last THREE Act 833 Annual Expenditure Report Forms. \*\*
- √ Documentation of the fire department's ISO Rating. \*\*
- \*\* Please include an explanation letter from the mayor/county judge if the fire department is newly formed and hasn't received these documents.

Office Use Only		
Cycle I: Control #		Complete / Eligible
Cycle II: Control #	Fire	Incomplete / Ineligible
Cycle III: Control #	CD	No Open Grants

## Arkansas Rural Community Grant Application

Community Name	County
Population (must ha	ve estimate if unincorporated area)
State Senator	Senate District Number
State Representative	House District Number
Incorporated area? Yes 🗌 No 🗌	If yes, mayor's name
If no, county judge's name	
If unincorporated area, name closest city or	town and distance
Amount for which you are applying	\$
Amount to be provided by the community	\$
Total project cost	\$

What is the project for which you are applying? (Briefly describe)

Who was involved in the development of this proposal? (list individuals, local organizations, community groups, etc.)

Why is the project needed? Please include discussion of any emergencies or urgent needs.
Who will be the beneficiaries of this project and how will they benefit? List organizations and groups to use project and purpose.
use project and purpose.
What funding and other resources will be used to maintain and operate the project in the future?
Name the closest comparable facility and distance from this project.
Have you collaborated with any other funding sources to help pay for this project? Yes $\square$ No $\square$ If so, please list the names and the collaboration efforts.
List other equipment, facilities, and other resources currently being used that are relevant to your application and what condition they are in.



Fire Protection Applicants ONLY:
Will this project directly affect your current ISO Rating? YES NO If so, how?
What planning efforts does your fire department have in place to lower the ISO Rating? Please discuss
any timelines for projects, goals achieved to date, and collaborations with county-wide fire department
What is the fire department located closest to this fire department?
How far away is the closest fire department?
How many households does the fire department currently cover?
How much does the fire department charge for a membership fee?
How many households covered actually pay the membership fee?

#### COST ESTIMATE BREAKDOWN

Please itemize the cost estimate for the project below as much as possible. You may add extra sheets if necessary. <u>Backup documentation for each line, including in-kind materials and labor, is required</u> (professional estimates, catalog pages, letters of intent to donate, etc.)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost</u>
	\$
	\$
	<u> </u>
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
	 \$
TOTAL PROJECT COST  FUNDING SOURCE BREAD  Must include back-up documentation that shows how the total projection of intent to donate, resolution with appropriation listed, etc.)	
Requested from Arkansas Rural Community Grant Program	\$
In-kind labor	\$
In-kind materials	\$
Community Cash Donations	\$
City or County Appropriation	\$
Other Funding Sources (please list)	\$
TOTAL FUNDING SOURCE BREAKDOWN	\$\$

List the name	e, address,	phone and	fax numbers	of two	contact	persons	who are	knowledgeable	about th	1e
application.	The third	column is	for the loca	l gover	ning offi	cial.				

NOTE: The individual listed in column one will receive all correspondence regarding application status in addition to the county judge or mayor. Individuals in column two will only be contacted if DRS staff are unable to contact the individual in column one.

Contact Name	(1)	(2)	(3)
Title	(1)	(2)	(3)
Address	(1)	(2)	(3)
City, State, Zip	(1)	(2)	(3)
Day Phone	(1)	(2)	(3)
Evening Phone	(1)	(2)	(3)
Fax	(1)	(2)	(3)
Email Address	(1)	(2)	(3)
With my signature grant funds throu	below, I do hereby certify t	hat I have read, under mmunity Grant Progra	(2)
Signature of Count	y Judge/Mayor / Date Signe	d	
Signature of Conta	ct Person / Date Signed		_

Please carefully review the application and be sure that you have completely answered every question. This document must be postmarked with all backup documentation required no later than 4:30 p.m. on the application deadline. The Department of Rural Services must receive an original copy along with 2 additional copies. FAXES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please mail applications to:

Signature of Contact Person / Date Signed

## CERTIFICATION LETTER

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ent Commission:
have furnished proof that they have raised in-kind donations as their matching share on the project agrees to provide the remainder ng requirements. Further, we have read the application nunity of is eligible to
as the person ultimately grant, if awarded. Project funds from all sources will be d on the books of the city/county of ject expenditures with invoices and cancelled checks
rion materials, will remain on file in the Mayor/County (whichever is later), to assure that funds were used for e.
g this project, please feel free to contact me or the at (phone number)
County Judge
County
Phone Number

## RESOLUTION PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL/QUORUM COURT

Note: This is a sample copy of a resolution intended to assist grant writers in knowing what to submit.

All Resolutions must be notarized by the local governing official.

	RESOLUTION # _		
	d by the City Council/Quorum Court o		, State of Arkansas a resolution
	n authorizing the Mayor of County to apply for a grant of b		Town or the County Judge of Community.
Whereas, th	ne Community n Community Brant Programs;	_ City Council/Qu neets eligibility red and	uorum Court has determined that the quirements necessary to apply for a grant
Whereas, th	ne	_ Community has	presented plans to (description of
project, conc	г City Council/Quorum Court of		; and recognizes the need for the Community in its efforts to
Whereas, th \$applicable);	ne through community cash and/or in-h	Community has for kind donations to be	urnished proof that they have raised e applied to the project as a local match (if
	5 to complete the		hereby appropriates ey requirement for the project described
an application grant funds i	n of formal request to the Arkansas Ru in the amount of \$ t e proposed project described herein an	ural Development C o aid and assist th nd that the Mayor	is hereby authorized to submit commission for purposes of securing state ne Community in /County Judge or Recorder/Treasurer of grant funds for the same project.
THIS RESO	DLUTION ADOPTED IN REGULAR S	SESSION	
APPROVED:	Signature of Mayor or County Judg	ge	
	Typed name of Mayor or County Ju	ıdge	
ATTEST:	Signature of City or County Clerk		